

**Northwest Resource Advisory Council Meeting
Dec. 8, 2016
Courtyard Marriott, Grand Junction, CO**

Minutes

NW RAC Present

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Jim Mattern	Connor Coleman	Tom Jankovsky
David Ludlam	Carl Conner	George Newman
Scott Robertson	Mike Pritchard	Dean Riggs
	Luke Schafer	Lanny Weddle
	Barbara Vasquez	

Not present: Wes McStay, Category 1

BLM attendees: David Boyd, Joe Meyer, Andrew Archuleta, Alicia Austin Johnson, Karl Mendonca, Kent Walter, Rob Berger, Bruce Sillitoe, Gloria Tibbetts, Erin Jones, Amy Carmichael, Heather Sauls, Lonny Bagley

Public: Jessica Dooling, XTO Energy; Lannie Massey, Rio Blanco County; Soren Jespersen, The Wilderness Society; Brian Meinhart, Congressman Tipton's office; Peter Hart, Wilderness Workshop; Tim Bauer, DeBeque resident; Warren King, The Wilderness Society

Called to order 8:03 a.m. A quorum was present. Introductions. New NW RAC appointees Tom Jankovsky and Scott Robertson were welcomed.

RAC 101 – David Boyd gave an overview of Resource Advisory Councils and the NW RAC, including past success stories. (see presentation posted on website)

Proposed Buffalo Horn Land Exchange – Heather Sauls gave an overview of this proposed land exchange. (see presentation posted on website)
The 45-day scoping period starts today.

Tom – Do you need Congressional approval to go through with this exchange?

Kent – No. It is a long, rigorous review process. The state director signs the decision

George – There are legislative and administrative processes a proponent can use.

Luke – Who owns the minerals under Parcel B?

Heather – We are not sure. It is very difficult to determine.

Barbara – Will you find out before you complete the exchange?

Heather – No. Mineral ownership can be incredibly challenging to determine. Since mineral ownership would not change, we don't need to determine mineral ownership.

Lanny – You mentioned that this ranch participates in Ranching for Wildlife, but doesn't the public have to pay to access areas that are Ranching for Wildlife?

Dean – It can vary. The tags can be private and sold, but there is a public portion that the public can apply for that gives you access. Buffalo Horn participates in Ranching for Wildlife and has public tags. They can be hard to get in the drawing, though.

Mike – Why do appraisals happen so late in the process?

Heather – It's by design. The DOI Office of Valuation Services does it. We want the appraisal to be within year of the closing date. But we work with them for rough values for feasibility analysis, which is early in the process.

Andrew – We also have to adjust boundaries based on the appraisals.

Heather – Cost recovery – Buffalo Horn pays for BLM's work, not taxpayers

Kent – But proponent knows there is no guarantee the exchange will go through even though they are paying for BLM's work on the evaluation

Lanny – What are the affected grazing permittees saying?

Heather – We haven't talked to them yet. The specialists don't think it will be an issue for them but we are notifying them for scoping.

George – Are both counties comfortable with exchange?

Heather – Yes, overall. Moffat County is not concerned about net loss of public land. Rio Blanco is concerned about net gain of public land related to property tax, however the Payment in Lieu of Taxes PILT should off-set loss of property taxes. The County does have concern about PILT consistency over time. Rio Blanco County is also concerned that if we acquire Parcel B, which links two Wilderness Study Areas, we would manage the area as one big wilderness. They are also concerned about split estate discouraging development.

Barbara – I am surprised you are proceeding without knowing who the mineral owner of parcel B is.

Heather – The big thing to us is that it is private. The specific owner is not as relevant to this process.

Tom – Anytime you can get rid of inholdings and increase larger blocks of public land it is a benefit. BLM still needs to answer a lot of questions, but big picture this makes sense.

David L – What would NEPA look like if mineral owner applied to develop parcel B?

Heather – It would be an EA first. If some development is approved we can later use a categorical exclusion.

David – I would think private landowner would want to know who owned the minerals under their land.

Heather – Determining mineral ownership can be quite involved.

Veg Treatment Programmatic EA

Erin Jones gave a presentation about the upcoming NW District Programmatic Environmental Assessment on vegetation treatments to benefit sage grouse. (see presentation posted on website)

Luke – LSFO already did one, would this trump that one?

Erin – No, but LSFO could still use it where appropriate

Luke – Does EA look at funding?

Erin – The projects are tied to program of work which is budget specific

Gloria – Having projects ready to go because the analysis is done makes them more competitive

Connor – Do you coordinate with private landowners? Do you use contractors or agency personnel?

Erin – Yes, we coordinate and we use both contractors and agency. Depends on the project.

Tom – Studies show that sage grouse have strong site fidelity. They won't always move back into newly treated areas. You'll need to assess whether it works

Erin – We are working with all agencies involved to try to figure out where these projects should do the most good. We do need to evaluate their success. Out of the 3.4M acres, we'll focus first on Priority GSG Habitat. But there are another 350 species that are dependent on sage brush habitat which will also benefit from the proposed treatments.

Public comment

Tim Bauer from DeBeque. I live on a private road that was taken over by oil and gas. They used to maintain the road but now it is tore up. I can't get a hold of anybody at Black Hills. Can someone help me? I am surrounded by BLM land so there is some BLM involvement.

David L – I have cell phone of person you need to talk to.

District and Field Manager Updates

Northwest District, Andrew Archuleta

Greater Sage Grouse update -- Bridget Clayton was hired earlier this year as the Colorado Greater Sage-grouse Implementation Coordinator. This position is helping ensure a consistent implementation of the Greater Sage-grouse amendment across the NW District. A monitoring coordinator has also been hired to track the sage grouse habitat monitoring across the Northwest District. A natural resource specialist has been approved to be hired to track projects and the disturbance caps. This summer seasonal "AIMs" crews began collecting data in Greater Sage-grouse habitat to be used for long-term monitoring of habitat and range conditions. Field Office staff are developing a number of projects to help sage grouse habitat. BLM continues to coordinate closely with Colorado Parks and Wildlife and state and local cooperators. A cooperator meeting is scheduled for Jan. 12 to discuss implementation to date.

Tom – Will monitoring coordinator just do habitat monitoring or species too? Will the public be able to see the data?

Andrew – The data will be available after we have organized it. It's mostly CPW for species

Northwest District oil and gas update – The December 8 oil and gas lease sale includes 24 parcels totaling 18,349 acres in the Grand Junction Field Office (two overlap into the Colorado River Valley Field Office. Twenty of the parcels are in the DeBeque area, four are near Collbran. The environmental assessment for the May 2017 oil and gas lease sale is available for public comment through Dec. 12. This EA analyzes more than 100,000 acres in the White River, Little Snake and Kremmling field offices. Consolidation is moving along well, with the Colorado River Valley Field Office handling oil and gas for the Grand Junction and Uncompahgre field offices, and the White River Field Office taking the lead for the Little Snake and Kremmling oil and gas projects. To date 19 applications for permit to drill have been approved this fiscal year (since Oct. 1); 14 in Colorado River Valley Field Office and 5 in the Grand Junction Field Office.

Barbara – Given the district realignments, is Grand Junction still under the Colorado River Valley Field Office for oil and gas?

Andrew – CRVFO has the lead for oil and gas for the Grand Junction and Uncompahgre field offices as well as CRV, LSO and KFO

Planning 2.0 Finalized – On December 1, BLM finalized its “Planning 2.0” rule designed to make its land use planning more accessible to the public, more responsive to changing conditions, and more efficient. The rule creates a new, up front process to gather data and hear concerns from all parties, and gives the public access to early draft plans. The agency anticipates that this early engagement will help make planning efforts significantly more efficient. The rule also continues to support the use of high quality information, including the best available science. More specific about this rule will be coming (February agenda item?). It also encourages landscape level assessments.

Barbara – Under this new can use adaptive management to respond in a timely fashion to changes on the ground either in impacts and/or advances in technology? Do you have more flexibility under new planning rule or are you bound for the 20-30year life of an RMP to the exact state of knowledge when it was finalized?.

Kent – We have that ability now, prior to the rule as well.

Minor Field Office boundary adjustments recommended: The Northwest District is proposing two minor boundary changes to increase efficiency. The first is a 177-acre parcel at State Bridge that both the Colorado River Valley and Kremmling field offices show within their boundaries. This, and a nearby 36.5-acre parcel, would be part of the Kremmling Field Office. The second is the boundary between the Colorado River Valley and White River field offices within the Roan Plateau Planning Area. The small part of the White River Field Office included in the Roan Plateau Planning Area would shift to the Colorado River Valley.

Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management Unit, Rob Berger

Overview: The Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management Unit encompasses more than 6.7 million acres of land along the Interstate 70 corridor from the Continental Divide on the east to the Utah state line on the west. The UCR is comprised of the BLM Colorado River Valley and Grand Junction field offices and the White River National Forest. The UCR cooperates with the Colorado National Monument, the GMUG National Forest, state agencies, local communities, and fire departments on a wide range of activities including fuels treatments, fire prevention, and suppression. UCR is based at the Grand Junction Air Center, which includes a tanker base. It’s divided into three zones: West Zone based in Grand Junction, Central Zone in Rifle, and East Zone in Eagle.

2016 season: The UCR had 204 fires totaling 5,976 acres during the 2016 season. There were 124 fires totaling 351 acres on BLM lands.

Aviation:*Grand Junction ATB and Rifle SEAT Base*

- The GJATB hosted 32 fixed wing aircraft during the 2016 fire season.
- The aircraft flew 393 flights on 79 different fires in 8 different states.
- 224,173 gallons of fire retardant was pumped out of GJATB.
- The 2016 Fire Season saw the opening of the new SEAT base in Rifle. This season 6 different SEATs flew 111 missions out of Rifle, dropping 69,371 gallons of retardant and 5,280 gallons of water. Aircraft were on the ramp for almost 60 days and were used to help fight 12 different fires in the state.

Helitack

- Contract Extended 26 days (September 4th-September 29rd)
- 184.6 flight hours
- 21 Initial Attacks
- 8 Extended Attack/Large Fire assignments, for a total of 74 days

Tom – What is the latest on the Lost Solar Fire?

Rob – It was started by a lightning strike on the White River National Forest. We felt like it was too risky to put people in there. We brought in the Unaweep Fire Module, which has expertise in managing remote fires. We had good public meetings, and meeting with hunters. We had positive interactions with private land owners. It ended up burning 4400 acres. Should see some great wildlife habitat as a result. We will need to remove hazard trees along the trail, which will be a big workload.

Northwest Colorado Fire Management Unit, Andrew Archuleta

Overview: The Northwest Colorado Fire Management Unit encompasses the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands in Northwest Colorado, which include the Little Snake, White River, and Kremmling field offices and Browns Park and Arapahoe Fish and Wildlife Refuges. This area covers just over 8.5 million acres of state, private and federal lands. The total acres of BLM and FWS lands are just over 3.1 million acres. It is divided into three zones: the east zone covers the mountainous areas east of Craig to Grand Lake and the Medicine-Bow Mountains in Jackson County; the north zone covers lands west of Craig to the Utah border; and the south zone covers the area west of Meeker. The Fire Management Unit handles fire suppression, fire management, fuels treatment, forestry, and fire education and mitigation.

2016 Season: The Northwest Fire Management Unit had 211 wildfires totaling 39,969 acres. The majority of those acres burned in the Beaver Creek Fire in Jackson County. More than 15,000 acres were on BLM this year.

SEAT Base: After two seasons, the Craig Single Engine Air Tanker should be up and running again for the 2017.

White River Field Office, Kent Walter

Travel Management process continues – With the NW RAC forwarding the recommendations of its subgroup on the White River Travel Management Plan regarding area designations, the White River Field Office has incorporated the recommendations and is beginning the impacts analysis for each alternative. A preliminary EA with a preferred alternative should be available for cooperating agency review in the spring and available for public review in the summer. Meanwhile, Field Office staff this summer completed a three-year effort to inventory all the BLM travel routes within the Field Office. The routes were GPSed with a data dictionary and GPS-linked photos. The Field Office will hold a public meeting in Dinosaur around the second week of January for the public review of the 2016 collected data. After the public review of this data, it will be combined with the 2014 and 2015 inventory data and the entire data set will be part of the TM RMPA to display our existing travel routes. We hope the final travel route inventory public products will include: hard copy maps, geo-referenced pdf maps, KML Google Earth files, ArcMap Online, and a geodatabase for ArcGIS users.

Barbara-The RAC liaison for the subgroup is one of the members who moved with the GJ FO to the SW RAC. Do you need us to appoint a new liaison now.

Kent – The travel management subgroup wants to continue on. We will re-engage later in the process and will keep you informed when a new liaison is required.

Trail outside Meeker completed – The White River Field Office put the final touches on the 1.3-mile East Ridge Trail above Meeker in November. The trail provides an important link for hikers, mountain bikes and horseback riders between the seven-mile Meeker Trail System and four miles of two-track trail on BLM previously inaccessible to the public by trail. The completion of this trail significantly contributes to the network of public trails outside Meeker. The Field Office has been working closely with the Town of Meeker and the Eastern Rio Blanco Metropolitan Recreation and Park District for several years to develop a designated trail system. Many local volunteers, Colorado Mountain Club, Conservation Colorado, and the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps helped build the trail.

Improvements on-going at the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area -- The Field Office plans to reconstruct nearly a mile of four-strand barbed-wire fencing near Duck Creek as part of a larger effort to ensure the 137-mile perimeter of the HMA is adequately fenced to reduce conflicts resulting from wild horses leaving the HMA. A redevelopment at Corcoran Spring is also planned to help ensure the spring provides a reliable source of water in both wet and dry years as well as help protect the spring source. An environmental assessment is currently out for public review on these proposed projects. The Field Office has already completed about 4.5 miles of new fencing along the boundary of the HMA to replace portions of the fences that are not functional or not fenced at all, resulting in horses getting onto the highway, outside the HMA, and onto private lands.

White River Field Office employees receive the Director's award – Three WRFO employees received the National BLM Director's Award for Superior Service for their work on the White River Field Office Oil and Gas Resource Management Plan Amendment. Wildlife Biologist Edward Hollowed, Planning and Environmental Coordinator Heather Sauls, and Mining Engineer Paul Daggett were members of the interdisciplinary team that developed the Amendment, which was approved in 2015. The Amendment addresses development of the Uinta-Piceance Basin, which is one of five basins in the West that contain the bulk of the federal onshore natural gas resource. As members of the interdisciplinary team, Hollowed, Sauls and Daggett were challenged to consider not only the importance of this energy reserve for the Nation but also potential impacts on spectacular natural resources including 300,000 acres of lands with wilderness characteristics, one of the largest migratory mule deer herds in the country, and visitors' experiences in Dinosaur National Monument. The approved plan includes a three-tiered approach to lands with wilderness characteristics, adaptive management to address impacts to mule deer populations, a threshold strategy for year-round development to reduce surface disturbance, and the Dinosaur Trail Master Leasing Plan that considers how adjacent development might impact Dinosaur National Monument.

Colorado River Valley Field Office, Karl Mendonca

Karl: I am retiring Jan. 3. It has been a great experience working with NW RAC. You have really helped with the CRVFO RMP, the Roan Plateau, our cave management.

Tom – Garfield County thanks you for your service. You have been an excellent manager to work with. We've been able to have an open dialogue, and you have included us in your decisions.

Roan Plateau Record of Decision released – The final Record of Decision for the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement was announced on November 17. It follows the Settlement Alternative, which retains two leases on top of the Plateau and the 12 at the base. The area where 17 leases were canceled in 2015 is closed to future leasing. No changes were made to travel management or recreational target shooting. The lands of the Roan Plateau were transferred to BLM in 1997. The "production area" was leased in 1999, and planning began for the full planning area in 2000.

Record of Decision for the EIS on 65 Leases in the White River National Forest released – The final Record of Decision for the EIS on 65 Leases in the White River National Forest was announced November 17. It follows the Preferred Alternative in the Final EIS, presented to the NW RAC in August. The 25 leases in Thompson Divide, where the Forest Service has closed to future leasing, were canceled. The 12 non-producing leases in the area remaining open to future leasing under the Forest Service plan are updated with the stipulations in the Forest Service plan. Twenty leases are held by production and are either not changed or receive slight modifications. Three leases expired during the EIS process, and five leases are under appeal (not related to this decision).

Application for Permit to Drill submitted in Thompson Divide – SG Interests, the company that held 18 of the 25 oil and gas leases recently canceled in the Thompson Divide area submitted an Application for Permit to Drill within the Wolf Creek Storage Unit in Thompson Divide. SG Interests holds the rights to develop the Mancos formation, which is deeper than the storage area. These leases were issued originally in the 1960s and were not covered by the 65 lease EIS. The Forest Service will have the lead on the environmental assessment for this APD, coordinating closely with BLM.

Hubbard Mesa education efforts – The Field Office recently met with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and other stakeholders such as shooting and OHV enthusiasts regarding education efforts about recreational target shooting in the Hubbard Mesa Off-highway Vehicle Open Area. This area has long been a popular area for target shooting, but it has seen significant increase in OHV, mountain biking and other recreational use over the past decade, creating potential user conflicts. The parties will continue to meet in the coming months.

Little Snake Field Office, Bruce Sillitoe

Sand Wash Basin Wild Horse Bait-trapping – The Little Snake Field Office and Northwest District have been working closely with the Sand Wash Advocacy Team (SWAT) and the Great Escape Mustang Sanctuary (GEMS) over the past month to bait trap wild horses in Sand Wash Basin. Currently the herd numbers more than 600, although the appropriate management level is between 162- and 362 horses. BLM and its partners hope to remove up to 50 wild horses, many of which would be placed at GEMS, and treat up to 75 mares with the fertility treatment PZP. Bait-trapping involves setting up a temporary corral with attractants such as hay and water. At a strategic point the gate on the corral is closed. It is a less-controversial technique, but it can be difficult. To date BLM and its partners have gathered 64 horses. Ten wild horses have been removed from the population and sent to Canon City. Thirty-one horses have been released back to the range, including six mares given the PZP treatment.

Andrew – We will take a hard look at the after action review for the Sand Wash gather once we are complete.

BLM employee donates kidney to fellow BLM employee – Nothing illustrates how close the BLM family is than the recent kidney donate from one Craig-based employee to another. GIS Specialist Pam Levitt was in need of a kidney transplant due to chronic kidney disease. Her family did not qualify to be donors, so User Support Specialist Bonnie Teeter-Hickey stepped up and offered one of hers. After a successful transplant, both are now working to spread the word about living organ donation and chronic kidney disease.

Travel Management effort continues to progress -- The field office is undertaking a comprehensive, multi-year look at the roads and trails that it manages. During the summer of 2016, the field office inventoried more than 1,300 miles of routes across approximately 370,000 acres it manages between Maybell and Craig north to the

Wyoming border. The public had the opportunity to review and comment on this inventory in the fall. This area is called Travel Management Inventory Area 2, and includes parts of the Powder Wash, Big Gulch, Seven Mile and Great Divide areas. The field office began this process for the adjacent Travel Management Inventory Area 1 in 2015. Preliminary management alternatives were released for public review earlier this year, and an environmental assessment analyzing the alternatives in detail is scheduled to be released for public review in February 2017. TMA1 includes Hiawatha, Vermillion Basin, Sand Wash and Bears Ears near Craig.

Kremmling Field Office, Stephanie Odell

Blue Valley Land Exchange

An EIS is being prepared for a proposed land exchange between Blue Valley Ranch and BLM. Under the proposed land exchange, the BLM would trade nine parcels totaling 1,489 acres in Grand County for nine parcels totaling 1,832 acres of mostly private lands in Grand and Summit counties. BLM is conducting the EIS to determine whether the exchange is in the public's interest to complete, and what the potential impacts of the exchange would be. The exchange could increase public access and increase publicly-held big game winter range, while the proponent would consolidate its holdings. Approximately 300 acres of the 1,832 acres gained by the public would be acquired by the U.S. Forest Service, with the remainder going to BLM. More than half of the BLM acreage (792 acres) that would be exchanged is surrounded by private land and has no public access. The majority of other BLM lands being considered for exchange are small, isolated parcels that receive little public use. The proposed exchange was initiated more than a decade ago but was deferred while the field office completed its Resource Management Plan Revision. We currently expect a final decision about whether or not to proceed with the exchange in 2017. A Draft EIS should be available for public review in 2017.

Recreation:

Capacity Study Update: The Kremmling Field Office is planning to begin a user capacity study to help its management of the Upper Colorado River Special Recreation Management Area. The last capacity study for the Upper Colorado River was in 2001. The field office is partnering with the Upper Colorado Wild & Scenic River Stakeholders Group to accomplish this task within the next couple of years. The results of the user capacity study will be used to make future decisions about the management of the river for the benefit of the public and natural resources.

RMP Travel Management Implementation: The Field Office continues to implement its travel management from its 2015 RMP and the Northwest Colorado Greater Sage Grouse Plan. More than 300 miles of roads and trails have been signed and portal signs installed in Recreation Management Areas and Priority Greater Sage Grouse habitat, both of which are areas we are prioritizing.

KFO completed the Government Creek resource protection at North Sand Hills SRMA and CMA. Motorized travel is limited to one crossing point accessing State Forest State Park and National Forest Lands. Resource protection at North Sand Hills included protecting a portion of a ephemeral tributary to North Sand Creek and working with adjacent rancher in preventing unauthorized trespass from the sand dunes. We completed

4 miles of corridor maintenance and trail reconstruction along the Government Ditch Trail that crosses BLM, SLB, and SFSP allowing for safe passage and preventing spur route creation due to downed timber and washed out sections. We have set up monitoring points and assessment of North Sand Creek Tributary and Dune area to monitor for natural dune sedimentation processes and visitor impacts.

Timber

Bark Beetle mitigation work continues – The Kremmling Field Office awarded the 3 Mile Sanitation Salvage Sale located in Jackson County in September 2015. The sale encompassed 113 harvest acres and 890 thousand board feet (MBF) of timber, that number was modified by the Beaver Creek Fire has burned this area, in addition to another sale that was on Independence Mountain, however the work has begun in Three Mile Creek. The office awarded the Smith Mesa Sanitation Salvage Sale located in Grand County in November of 2015, and was completed this year. This sale encompassed 303 harvest acres and 1503 MBF of timber. We have also awarded 4 more sales; in King's Canyon, Mule Creek, and Owl Mountain, Smith Mesa and. KFO is currently administering 17 timber and biomass sales encompassing approximately 2,300 acres of harvest units in Grand and Jackson counties.

Beaver Creek Fire

The Beaver Creek fire was declared 100% contained on October 13, 2016. On June 19, 2016 the Beaver Creek Fire was detected 24 miles northwest of Walden, CO. The fire burned a total of 38,380 acres in Jackson County and Carbon County (Wyoming). An Interdisciplinary Team began to assess resources during non-containment and will continue to access as weather allows. The team consists of individuals representing hydrology, soils, cultural resources, wildlife, vegetation, fisheries, recreation, rangeland management, engineering, hazardous materials, noxious weeds, fuels, and geographic information systems. Field reconnaissance began as early as September 1, 2016 and continues to present date. Data from the field missions are being compiled, and added to existing, pre-burn information to create a list of values threatened by the fire or potential post-fire effects. Initial reports have determined that the fire has burned in heavy beetle killed timber. The infested trees are subject to blowing over contributing large amounts of down timber and providing fuel for extreme fire behavior when strong winds and terrain features are in alignment. This coincides with much of our BARC imagery in which 2,763 of high severity and 5,126 acres of moderate severity on BLM CO land much of which occurred within our lodge pole forests. Much of the high burn severity has also occurred in drainages including several perennial streams and rivers. This raises concerns for both water quality and fisheries in which several streams are listed as impaired. Several roads have been identified as being at risk of being damaged or eroded due to the severity of some of the burn areas. Lastly several noxious weed species occur within the fire perimeter, some of which occurred in high severity areas. To maintain a diverse vegetative community these areas will have to be chemically treated in coordination with proper seeding and planting.

The Kremmling Field Office will complete the Beaver Creek Rehab Environmental Assessment by the spring of 2017 in order to implement rehab actions for various resource concerns. The Kremmling Field Office ESRS plan was just recently approved

by the Washington office which will coincide with actions discussed in the Environmental Assessment. On June 19, 2016 the Beaver Creek Fire was detected 24 miles northwest of Walden, CO. The fire burned a total of 38,380 acres in Jackson county and Carbon County. The Beaver Creek fire was declared 100% contained on October 13, 2016. An Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) began to assess resources during non-containment and will continue to access as weather allows. The team consists of individuals representing hydrology, soils, cultural resources, wildlife, vegetation, fisheries, recreation, rangeland management, engineering, hazardous materials, noxious weeds, fuels, and geographic information systems (GIS). Field reconnaissance began as early as September 1, 2016 and continues to present date. Data from the field missions are being compiled, and added to existing, pre-burn information to create a list of values threatened by the fire or potential post-fire effects. Initial reports have determined that the fire has burned in heavy beetle killed timber. The infested trees are subject to blowing over contributing large amounts of down timber and providing fuel for extreme fire behavior when strong winds and terrain features are in alignment. This coincides with much of our BARC imagery in which 2,763 of high severity and 5,126 acres of moderate severity on BLM CO land much of which occurred within our lodge pole forests. Much of the high burn severity has also occurred in drainages including several perennial streams and rivers. This raises concerns for both water quality and fisheries in which several streams are listed as impaired. Several roads have been identified as being at risk of being damaged or eroded due to the severity of some of the burn areas. Lastly several noxious weed species occur within the fire perimeter, some of which occurred in high severity areas. To maintain a diverse vegetative community these areas will have to be chemically treated in coordination with proper seeding and planting.

Luke – Is there an opportunity for volunteers on the fire rehab for Beaver Creek?

Andrew – I think so

Alicia – We might have a seasonal AIMs team focus on monitoring the Beaver Creek Fire this year. Also, we are updating the biological assessment for Colorado River depletions related to oil and gas. That maybe a good future RAC topic.

Barbara – I would like to hear from Stephanie at the next RAC meeting what her timeline is for presenting a fee proposal for the North Sand Hills. It's my understanding she has been working on elements of it for over a year.

Andrew- I'll discuss it with her and get back to you.

Budget Overview

Amy Carmichael gave an overview of the federal budget and how it relates to BLM. (see presentation posted on website).

The bottom line is that the DOI receives 1% of the discretionary spending, which is approximately 30% of the entire Federal budget BLM. The entire BLM receives 9% of

the DOI's 1%, or approximately 0.025% of the entire Federal discretionary spending. The total budget for the NW District has varied from approximately \$24M in 2010 to approximately \$20M in 2016, a downward trend. Approximately 85% of the total is spent on labor. BLM facilities are paid for at the State level.

Connor – Has the budget decrease affected staffing as it has for the White River National Forest?

Amy – Yes. Our seasonal workforce has probably taken the biggest hit

Kent – BLM Colorado has been aggressive in workforce planning, so we were prepared.

Andrew – We have been feeling the pain over time – a little bit at a time.

Tom – Does the money generated by the Silverton Ski area go back to BLM?

Joe – some does

Carl – hard for me to picture all the money from oil and gas goes straight to the Treasury. The RAC should be able to recommend that a fixed percentage of the revenue come back directly to BLM district in which it was generated to pay for impacts.

Tom- Some of the money that comes back to the State does get funneled via DOLA to communities impacted by oil/gas development and pays for things like skating rinks.

Carl- But that doesn't address environmental or cultural resource impacts.

Brian Meinhart- The direct deposit of oil/gas revenues to the Treasury a matter of federal law.

Oil and gas leasing

Lonny Bagley gave an overview of Federal oil and gas leasing (see presentation posted on website).

Mike – how often does BLM nominate parcels itself?

Lonny – Rarely. Typically only when there is a drainage issue where wells on private may drain public minerals

Mike – This seems really reactive, waiting for nominations. Is there a fee companies pay; Are there bogus expression of interests?

Lonny – There is no fee to file an expression of interest. Sometimes we get EOIs that are not valid. And although the new website Energy Net makes public the entity or individual

filing the EOI, companies sometimes use third parties to submit the EOIs to maintain anonymity or can request anonymity when they submit.

David – How does litigation and protest affect leases that are already issued?

Lonny – Addressing the protests of the lease sale is part of process. We are getting a number of protests. We respond to lawsuits. We would refund money to the leaseholder if we had to cancel leases as a result of litigation. BLM decisions stand unless court issues a stay.

Oil and Gas Unitization

Lonny Bagley gave a presentation about oil and gas lease unitization.

Barbara – I have heard about forced leasing in Weld County. What's that?

Lonny – That can happen with a unit where other leaseholders are developing nearby.

Barbara – Can you grant extension of leases?

Lonny – We don't grant extensions but we can grant a suspension if operator is precluded from getting to minerals due to something that is not their fault. That's at the operator's request.

David – How does site-specific analysis play into this? Development may never happen, or it may be very different 6 or 7 years after the original analysis.

Lonny – The BLM must consider all new and relevant information when we permit site specific activities. Our analysis would never stand up if we didn't do so.

Joe – We have to do a NEPA analysis to lease, then another NEPA analysis before permitting development

Tom – What if operator can't do anything on lease because they are waiting for BLM, do they get an extension?

Lonny – They can apply for suspension

Barbara – Are suspensions public?

Lonny – Yes, on request. Not on-line right now

David – Have you changed your approach to units as a result of recent politicization

Lonny – We have not changed our approach

Barbara – Units could hold a lease with older stipulations.

Lonny – We still have to consider all new information at the APD (Application for Permission to Drill).

Kent – Any new “stips” necessary on existing leases are handled under Conditions of Approval.

Carl – Public access to leases? I have come across locked gates and have been driven away from public lands by employees of operators.

Lonny – Sometime an operator may get access across private land for oil and gas on BLM, but general public does not get access across the private land.

Kent – We will close roads for resource concerns. Sometimes might just have a road for oil and gas that is eventually rehabbed.

Luke – Some of this is expectation management. If road is temporary and there is public access, could create issue later in time

Dean – We (CPW) weigh in on road access and closures to protect wildlife.

Public comment

Warren King – The Wilderness Society. The idea of multiple use is BLM’s mandate. Oil and gas gets some preferential treatment. 90 percent of federal minerals are available for leasing. Leaving all these lands open to leasing, especially through suspensions and unitization can preclude BLM from managing for other resources like Lands with Wilderness Character or wildlife. This RAC would be well-served to hear numbers of leases in suspension in northwestern Colorado, the number of unitized leases, how many leases are being developed currently. Having that information might make your recommendations better to BLM.

Resolutions for future

Buffalo Horn Land Exchange – Barbara: the Field Manager will keep us informed, bring us in when necessary.

Dean – Probably no one here would disagree with getting rid of little parcels

Veg treatments – The RAC will need more information before deciding whether to consider a resolution

George – Where I am from the BLM is always working with local jurisdictions, and they do a good job of getting word out. Don’t think a resolution is necessary.

Meeting review, suggestions for next time

Barbara commented that ‘some of us are more likely to speak up than others during the meeting, myself included. She asked each RAC member and BLM participant, in turn, to comment on this meeting.

Jim – enjoyed presentations, especially oil and gas

Mike – good presentation, exposed to many other aspects of BLM than I normally am.

Scott – presentations were good for me to hear

Dave B will get specific budget information for the NW district

Tom – I appreciate that The Wilderness Society supports multiple use because I do too. We may have different take on it. Extremely important on public lands

Lanny – Echo Tom’s comments on multiple use. A lot of good info in the presentations

Bruce – The Little Snake Field Office has two assistant field managers now. Hunter over renewable. Kathy over non-renewable.

David L – A future topic could be oil and gas lease roads for public access. Want to learn more about that.

Connor – Good info. The RAC list shows eight new members. Could be worth repeating field trips other agenda items from the past, given there are so many new members.

Carl – Refreshing to see BLM moving into new age with planning 2.0. Happy to see it all.

Joe – I hope there it continuing opportunity to share among the different RACs in Colorado

Lanny – I don’t see harm in Joe in continuing to participate in the NW RAC. Having all three DFOs in the room could be benefit

Dean – Good agenda. Appreciate this roundtable process at the end of the meeting. This RAC really wants to make recommendations, not as much informational material as a general rule. Could these RAC members travel to other RAC meetings?

Andrew: Yes, that would be good for sharing ideas.

Gloria – Thanks to you all. Your time is definitely appreciated.

Karl – Never seen leasing discussion or budget. Really helpful.

Luke – I really enjoy detail-oriented presentations. Welcome more.

Future meetings

March 1-2 CRVFO (Vegetation treatment field trip?)

May 31-June 1 WRFO (Buffalo Horn Land Exchange field trip?)

Aug 23-24 Walden (Beaver Creek Fire field trip?)

Dec. 6-7 Little Snake

Barbara requests that five weeks before the next RAC meeting Dave B send an e-mail to the group asking for agenda items, and to send minutes out for approval at the same time. The RAC will formally vote to approve minutes from the past meeting near the beginning of each meeting.

Additional future agenda items

Mike – Share, when available, BLM's new Guidelines for Quality Trail Experience.

Planning 2.0

Luke -- Update on Transwest and Gateway South Records of Decision. Maybe include a map in the Field Manager update

Bring Lonny back to share maps displaying leased, extended, suspended and unitized parcels and to present information about oil/gas pipelines.

Meeting adjourns at 3 p.m.